

Audit Matrix Note: A subset of 2005-2009 Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard® requirements were audited, as indicated by check marks and by results in the “Evidence and Notes” rows below those requirements that were audited.

Objective 1: To broaden the implementation of sustainable forestry by ensuring long-term harvest levels based on the use of the best scientific information available.

Performance Measure/ Indicator		Auditor	----- Check Only One -----				OFI
			FC	EXR	Maj	Min	
1.1	<i>Program Participants shall ensure that long-term harvest levels are sustainable and consistent with appropriate growth and-yield models and written plans.</i>	MF	X				
1.1.1	A long-term resource analysis to guide forest management planning at a level appropriate to the size and scale of the operation, including: a. a periodic or ongoing forest inventory; b. a land classification system; c. soils inventory and maps, where available; d. access to growth-and-yield modelling capabilities; e. up-to-date maps or a geographic information system (GIS); f. recommended sustainable harvest levels; and g. a review of nontimber issues (e.g., pilot projects and economic incentive programs to promote water protection, carbon storage, or biological diversity conservation).	MF	X				
Objective Evidence & Notes	<p>A. Confirmed that inventory information is updated regularly, after harvests, prior to harvests, and occasionally not in association with timber sales. An informal standard exists to perform this “recon.” on at least 5% of the forest each year. Most counties appear to be achieving this most years, with occasional use of grants to perform catch up recon (termed backlog).</p> <p>B. and E. Confirmed use of GIS and many land classification tools, including Kotar habitat classification, stand maps, and site index measurements.</p> <p>C. GIS includes soils where available.</p> <p>D. These capabilities exist.</p> <p>F. Allowable cut determinations are provided in management plans, providing a good analysis, description of methods, and strategic approaches to deal with age class imbalances. Annual tactical planning refines these harvest level determinations. Confirmed through review of draft 15-Year County Forest Plans and through discussions with foresters and review of some recon tables.</p> <p>G. draft 15-Year County Forest Plans and accompanying Environmental Assessments include extensive reviews of non-timber issues.</p>						
1.1.2	Documentation of annual harvest trends in relation to the sustainable forest management plan.	MF	X				
Objective Evidence & Notes	Confirmed that harvest levels are tracked annually and reported by species or species group for each forest and totalled across entire county forest system (25 of 29 counties are enrolled in the SFI certification). Over the past 10 years harvests have been at about 76% of net forest growth based on FIA data. 43,400 acres of 49,000 acres scheduled for harvest annually are treated (89% of calculated allowable harvest), mostly due to manpower constraints (source Environmental Assessment). Untreated stands are moved into the treatment queue for a subsequent year, and observed stands remain within appropriate stocking levels or rotation lengths to sustain healthy, productive forests.						

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Performance Measure/ Indicator		Auditor	----- Check Only One -----				OFI
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1.1.3	A forest inventory system and a method to calculate growth.	MF	X				
Objective Evidence & Notes	See 1.1.1 above.						
1.1.4	Periodic updates of inventory and recalculation of planned harvests.	MF	X				1
Objective Evidence & Notes	See 1.1.1 above. Area control system, with allowable harvest levels adjusted annually. From Environmental Assessment: "Recon inventory indicators a need to examine approximately 75,000 acres for harvest annually. This includes a backlog, most notably on northern hardwood, aspen, and scrub oak types." OFI: An opportunity exists to improve the timeliness of recon updates.						
1.1.5	Documentation of forest practices (e.g., planting, fertilization, and thinning) consistent with assumptions in harvest plans.	MF	X				
Objective Evidence & Notes	Review of data in Environmental Assessment confirmed that plan assumptions that relate to allowable harvests are conservative, and that needed cultural practices are implemented.						

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Objective 2: To ensure long-term forest productivity and conservation of forest resources through prompt reforestation, soil conservation, afforestation and other measures.

Performance Measure/ Indicator		Auditor	----- Check Only One -----				OFI
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2.1	<i>Program Participants shall reforest after final harvest, unless delayed for site-specific environmental or forest health considerations, through artificial regeneration within two years or two planting seasons, or by planned natural regeneration methods within five years.</i>						
2.1.1	Designation of all management units for either natural or artificial regeneration.						
2.1.2	Clear Requirements to judge adequate regeneration and appropriate actions to correct under-stocked areas and achieve desired species composition and stocking rates for both artificial and natural regeneration	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	County foresters review all regeneration harvests, and DNR Liaison foresters review and approve them. During recon work regeneration checks are done, using a variety of methods. Silvicultural guidelines exists for all managed forest types, and foresters interviewed are familiar with the guidelines. Observed examples of efforts to regenerate difficult species such as birch, hemlock, and white pine (deer browse can hamper the later two).						
2.1.3	Minimized plantings of exotic tree species and research documentation that exotic tree species, planted operationally, pose minimal risk.	NA					
2.1.4	Protection of desirable or planned advanced natural regeneration during harvest.						
2.1.5	Artificial reforestation programs that consider potential ecological impacts of a different species or species mix from that which was harvested.						
2.2	<i>Program Participants shall minimize chemical use required to achieve management objectives while protecting employees, neighbors, the public and the forest environment.</i>						
2.2.1	Minimized chemical use required to achieve management objectives.						
2.2.2	Use of least toxic and narrowest spectrum pesticide narrowest spectrum and least toxic pesticides necessary to achieve management objective.						
2.2.3	Use of pesticides registered for the intended use and applied in accordance with the label requirements.						
2.2.4	Use of Integrated Pest Management where feasible.						
2.2.5	Supervision of forest chemical applications by state-trained or certified applicators.						
2.2.6	Use of best management practices appropriate to the situations						
2.3	<i>Program Participants shall implement management practices to protect and maintain forest and soil productivity.</i>						
2.3.1	Use of soils maps where available.						

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2.3.2	Process to identify soils vulnerable to compaction and use of appropriate methods to avoid excessive soil disturbance.	MF	X			
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed extensive use of mitigation techniques on all active sales observed, including use of modern, low impact logging equipment, extensive harvest on snow-covered, frozen ground, careful planning of harvest units to avoid sensitive soils, and excellent logging technique including use of brush mats.					
2.3.3	Use of erosion control measures to minimize the loss of soil and site productivity.					
2.3.4	Post-harvest conditions conducive to maintaining site productivity (e.g., limited rutting, retained down woody debris, minimized skid trails).					
2.3.5	Retention of vigorous trees during partial harvesting, consistent with silvicultural norms for the area.	MF	X			1
Evidence & Notes	Field observations at all sites visited confirmed the retention of vigorous trees and the application of state-of-the-art hardwood silviculture. OFI: There is an opportunity to improve application of this guidance, which is quite deep.					
2.3.6	Criteria that address harvesting and site preparation to protect soil productivity.	MF	X			1
Evidence & Notes	Work in this area by the Wisconsin State Hydrologist is still in progress. Interim rutting guidelines have been adopted by the state for state forests, but the counties have not yet adopted these. Instead each county, and in some cases individual foresters within counties, have their own criteria. OFI: There is an opportunity to improve the consistent definition of excessive rutting and to better understand the long-term effects of compaction and rutting.					
2.3.7	Minimized road construction to meet management objectives efficiently.					
2.4	<i>Program Participants shall manage so as to protect forests from damaging agents such as environmentally or economically undesirable wildfire, pests and diseases to maintain and improve long-term forest health, productivity and economic viability.</i>					
2.4.1	Program to protect forests from damaging agents.					
2.4.2	Management to promote healthy and productive forest conditions to minimize susceptibility to damaging agents.	MF	X			
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed in all stands visited, and many portions of forests seen while driving between field stops, that the four county forests visited maintain healthy stands.					
2.4.3	Participation in, and support of, fire and pest prevention and control programs.					
2.5	<i>Program Participants that utilize genetically improved planting stock including those derived through biotechnology shall use sound scientific methods and follow all applicable laws and other internationally applicable protocols.</i>					
2.5.1	Program for appropriate research, testing, evaluation and deployment of genetically improved planting stock					

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Objective 3: To protect water quality in streams, lakes and other water bodies.

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3.1	<i>Program Participants shall meet or exceed all applicable federal, provincial, state and local water quality laws and meet or exceed Best Management Practices developed under Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved state water quality programs other applicable federal, provincial, state or local programs.</i>						
3.1.1	Program to implement state or provincial equivalent BMPs during all phases of management activities.						
3.1.2	Contract provisions that specify BMP compliance.						
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed in all recent contracts, and also that this requirement is included in the new forest management plans.						
3.1.3	Plans that address wet weather events (e.g., inventory systems, wet weather tracts, defining acceptable operational conditions, etc.).	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed by observing the nature and extent of winter logging, and by discussions with sale administration foresters.						
3.1.4	Monitoring of overall BMP implementation.						
3.2	<i>Program Participant shall have or develop, implement, and document, riparian protection measures based on soil type, terrain, vegetation and other applicable factors.</i>	MF	X				
3.2.1	Program addressing management and protection of streams, lakes and other water bodies and riparian zones.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed continuing implementation of protection programs, in cooperation between county and DNR foresters and specialists.						
3.2.2	Mapping of streams, lakes and other water bodies and riparian zones, and where appropriate, identification on the ground.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Field observations at all sites visited confirmed that aquatic features are mapped and identified on the ground in association with timber harvests.						
3.2.3	Implementation of plans to manage or protect streams, lakes and other water bodies.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Field observations at all sites visited confirmed implementation of harvest designs and management plan and other guidelines for riparian protection.						
3.2.4	Identification and protection of nonforested wetlands, including bogs, fens, vernal pools and marshes of significant size.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Field observations at all sites visited confirmed.						
3.2.5	Where regulations or BMPs do not currently exist to protect riparian areas, use of experts to identify appropriate protection measures.	NA					

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Objective 4: Manage the quality and distribution of wildlife habitats and contribute to the conservation of biological diversity by developing and implementing stand- and landscape- level measures that promote habitat diversity and the conservation of forest plants and animals including aquatic fauna.

Performance Measure/ Indicator		Auditor	----- Check Only One -----				OFI
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4.1	<i>Program participants shall have programs to promote biological diversity at stand- and landscape- scales.</i>	MF	X				2
4.1.1	Program to promote the conservation of native biological diversity, including species, wildlife habitats, and ecological or natural community types, at stand and landscape levels.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed that the 15-Year County Forest Management Plans include extensive sections describing stand and landscape level biodiversity-related issues. Confirmed that a specialist with the Bureau of Endangered Resources is working with the counties to assess their ownerships and determine areas that should receive special management or protection (HCVF). This designation process is linked to the process for finalizing the 15-Year County Forest Management Plans. All 4 counties visited have such areas, and are considering expanding them or increasing attention to their management and protection.						
4.1.2	Program to protect threatened and endangered species.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed through interviews the use of the heritage database, and follow-up activities, to protect T&E species. Observed Goshawk nest protection in field and documented measures to protect these sites, with an emphasis on avoidance during nesting season.						
4.1.3	Plans to locate and protect known sites associated with viable occurrences of critically imperiled and imperiled species and communities. Plans for protection may be developed independently or collaboratively and may include Program Participant management, cooperation with other stakeholders, or use of easements, conservation land sales, exchanges, or other conservation strategies	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Foresters are aware of these species and their locations. Many foresters are trained in Lupine and Karner Blue Butterfly issues. See also 4.1.2 above.						
4.1.4	Development and implementation of criteria, as guided by regionally appropriate science, for retention of stand-level wildlife habitat elements (e.g., snags, mast trees, down woody debris, den trees, nest trees).	MF	X				1
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed that the Silicultural Guidelines contain criteria for stand-level habitat retention. These criteria are implemented in the field, although the amount and type of retention in clearcuts varies considerably. Retention of larger trees for future snags, dens, or down coarse woody debris is not understood or accepted by all foresters. OFI: There is an opportunity to improve the knowledge and use of quantitative guidelines for stand level retention (e.g. coarse woody debris, den trees, snags) to ensure more consistent implementation.						
4.1.5	Assessment, conducted individually or collaboratively, of forest cover types and habitats at the individual ownership level and, where credible data are available, across the landscape,	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed that Wisconsin DNR has done a state-wide assessment "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" and that DNR biologists and others who review the 15-year County Forest Plans are aware of this assessment. Confirmed the process for refining this information to provide customized lists of species for each county. The Wisconsin Public Forest Resource Group meets twice annually, including Federal, State, & County Forest representatives. Other assessment work noted the decline in Jack Pine in NW Wisconsin and led to significant efforts to maintain Jack Pine on County Forests in this part of the state. Likewise, significant declines in Aspen acres on private forests have led to strong, continuing efforts to maintain this valuable type on county forests.						

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4.1.6	Support of and participation in plans or programs for the conservation of old-growth forests in the region of ownership.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	WCFA engaged the US Forest Service during the plan revision for the Chequamegon – Nicolet National Forest. This plan includes substantial old-growth protection.						
4.1.7	Participation in programs and demonstration of activities as appropriate to limit the introduction, impact, and spread of invasive exotic plants and animals that directly threaten or are likely to threaten native plant and animal communities.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed limited participation in invasive control work. In most portions of the (very northerly) counties reviewed in 2006 invasive exotic plants and animals are not yet a significant concern.						
4.1.8	Program to incorporate the role of prescribed or natural fire where appropriate.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	See 4.1.5 above relating to Jack Pine maintenance. County forests conduct site preparation burns in Jack Pine and Oak types, and maintenance burns elsewhere. Confirmed Bayfield County's leadership in the development of a Community Fire Plan for the Barnes area of the county, which is a sand plain with significant fire-types. Confirmed that many county personnel are well trained in fire control and suppression, involved in fire-fighting, and thus increasingly able to utilize prescribed fire as needed in their silvicultural activities.						
4.2	<i>Program Participants shall apply knowledge gained through research, science, technology, and field experience to manage wildlife habitat and contribute to the conservation of biological diversity.</i>	MF	X				
4.2.1	Collection of information on critically imperiled and imperiled species and communities and other biodiversity-related data through forest inventory processes, mapping, or participation in external programs, such as NatureServe, state or provincial heritage programs, or other credible systems. Such participation may include providing nonproprietary scientific information, time, and assistance by staff, or in-kind or direct financial support.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	WI DNR runs this program, and County Forests have access through DNR Liaison Foresters or directly after they receive special training. Some counties visited this time have received the training.						
4.2.2	A methodology to incorporate research results and field applications of biodiversity and ecosystem research into forest management decisions.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed through interviews and review of documents that the DNR Biologists, working directly with county foresters or through DNR Liaison Foresters, effectively provide this research extension function. Reviewed training documents, some of which include direct training of forests in these issues.						

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Objective 5: To manage the visual impact of harvesting and other forest operations.

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5.1	<i>Program Participants shall manage the impact of harvesting on visual quality.</i>	MF	X				
5.1.1	Program to address visual quality management.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Use of professionally trained foresters, Silviculture and Aesthetics Handbook, harvest planning and layout, requirements for utilization and review by county foresters and DNR continue to comprise an effective visual quality management program.						
5.1.2	Incorporation of aesthetic considerations in harvesting, road, landing design and management, and other management activities where visual impacts are a concern.	MF		X			
Evidence & Notes	The on-the-ground results observed at all sites visited were exceptional, with many careful provisions taken to improve the appearance of harvest sites.						
5.2	<i>Program Participants shall manage the size, shape, and placement of clearcut harvests.</i>	MF	X				
5.2.1	Average size of clearcut harvest areas does not exceed 120 acres, except when necessary to respond to forest health emergencies or other natural catastrophes.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	No clearcuts viewed at selected field sites or during extensive travels throughout four forests were larger than 40 acres.						
5.2.2	Documentation through internal records of clearcut size and the process for calculating average size.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	2460 Forms reviewed accurately reflect sale and opening sizes						
5.3	<i>Program Participants shall adopt a green-up requirement or alternative methods that provide for visual quality.</i>						
5.3.1	Program implementing the green-up requirement or alternative methods.						
5.3.2	Harvest area tracking system to demonstrate compliance with the green-up requirement or alternative methods.						
5.3.3	Trees in clearcut harvest areas are at least 3 years old or 5 feet high at the desired level of stocking before adjacent areas are clearcut, or as appropriate to address operational and economic considerations, alternative methods to reach the performance measure are utilized by the Program Participant.						

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Objective 6: To manage Program Participant lands that are ecologically, geologically, historically, or culturally important in a manner that recognizes their special qualities.

Performance Measure/ Indicator		Auditor	----- Check Only One -----				OFI
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6.1.	<i>Program Participants shall identify special sites and manage them in a manner appropriate for their unique features.</i>	MF	X				
6.1.1	Use of existing natural heritage data and expert advice in identifying or selecting sites for protection because of their ecologically, geologically, historically, or culturally important qualities.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed that the 15-Year County Forest Management Plans include sections describing identification and protection of special sites. Confirmed that a specialist with the Bureau of Endangered Resources is working with the counties to assess their ownerships and determine areas that should receive special management or protection (HCVF). This designation process is linked to the process for finalizing the 15-Year County Forest Management Plans. All 4 counties visited have such areas, and are considering expanding them or increasing attention to their management and protection.						
6.1.2	Appropriate mapping, cataloging, and management of identified special sites.						

Objective 7: To promote the efficient use of forest resources.

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7.1	<i>Program Participants shall employ appropriate forest harvesting technology and “in-woods” manufacturing processes and practices to minimize waste and ensure efficient utilization of harvested trees, where consistent with other SFI Standard objectives.</i>	MF	X				
7.1.1	1. Program or monitoring system to ensure efficient utilization, which may include provisions to ensure: a. landings left clean with little waste; b. residues distributed to add organic and nutrient value to future forests; c. training or incentives to encourage loggers to enhance utilization; d. cooperation with mill managers for better utilization of species and low-grade material; e. merchandizing of harvested material to ensure use for its most beneficial purpose; f. development of markets for underutilized species and low-grade wood; g. periodic inspections and reports noting utilization and product separation; or h. exploration of alternative markets (e.g., energy markets).	MF	X				
Objective Evidence & Notes	Observations at four active timber harvest sites confirmed excellent utilization. Reviewed sale inspection notes, which comprise the records of the monitoring system, and interviews with foresters and loggers confirmed that foresters closely monitor all sales.						

Objective 8: To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry through procurement programs. Note: Objective 8 does not apply to Wisconsin County System.

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Objective 9: To improve forestry research, science, and technology, upon which sound forest management decisions are based.

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9.1	<i>Program Participants shall individually, through cooperative efforts, or through associations provide in-kind support or funding, in addition to that generated through taxes, for forest research to improve the health, productivity, and management of forest resources.</i>						
9.1.1	Current financial or in-kind support of research to address questions of relevance in the region of operations. The research will include some or all of the following issues: a. forest health, productivity, and ecosystem functions; b. chemical efficiency, use rate, and integrated pest management; c. water quality; d. wildlife management at stand or landscape levels; e. conservation of biological diversity; and f. effectiveness of BMPs.						
9.2	<i>Program Participants shall individually, through cooperative efforts, or through associations develop or use state, provincial, or regional analyses in support of their sustainable forestry programs.</i>	MF	X				
9.2.1	Participation, individually or through cooperative efforts or associations at the state, provincial, or regional level, in the development or use of a. regeneration assessments; b. growth-and-drain assessments; c. BMP implementation and compliance; and d. biodiversity conservation information for family forest owners.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Foresters measure or make observations about regeneration during recon and at specified intervals following regeneration harvests. DNR is involved in regeneration research, growth and cut assessment, and BMP monitoring at the state level. DNR Private lands foresters provide biodiversity conservation information to private landowners. Confirmed that handouts are available at DNR, and some county forestry offices.						

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Objective 10: To improve the practice of sustainable forest management by resource professionals, logging professionals, and contractors through appropriate training and education programs.

Performance Measure/ Indicator		Auditor	----- Check Only One -----				OFI
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10.1	10.1. Program Participants shall require appropriate training of personnel and contractors so that they are competent to fulfill their responsibilities under the SFI Standard.	MF				1	
10.1.1	Written statement of commitment to the SFI Standard communicated throughout the organization, particularly to mill and woodland managers, wood procurement staff, and field foresters.	MF	X				
Objective Evidence & Notes	Confirmed that this commitment was made by each county board and is included in the 15-Year County Forest Management Plans for all counties participating in the SFI Certification Program.						
10.1.2	Assignment and understanding of roles and responsibilities for achieving SFI Standard objectives.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Responsibilities are clearly spelled out in state handbook, and clear evidence of actions by County Forestry Specialist, County Forest Certification Committee, and various counties was provided.						
10.1.3	Staff education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.	MF	X				
Objective Evidence & Notes	Confirmed implementation of training-related corrective plan for Minor Non-conformance (2004-03) in all four counties visited in Surveillance Audit visit. Forest Industry Safety and Training Alliance (FISTA) SIC (SFI Statewide Implementation Committee) approved BMP training sessions were sponsored by WI DNR throughout the state, and attended by all field foresters as needed. Also confirmed that BMPs use is listed in timber sale contracts and in the management plans. Training requirements have changed in current 2005-2009 Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard®.						
10.1.4	Contractor education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.	MF				X	
Evidence & Notes	Closed related Minor Non-conformance (2004-04). Training requirements have changed in current 2005-2009 Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard® from specific training “encouraged” to less specific training essentially mandated. Could not confirm that all counties have adopted requirements for training for contractors. Minor Non-conformance MF-2006-01						
10.2	Program Participants shall work closely with state logging or forestry associations, or appropriate agencies or others in the forestry community, to foster improvement in the professionalism of wood producers.						
10.2.1	Participation in or support of SFI Implementation Committees to establish criteria and identify delivery mechanisms for wood producers’ training courses that address (list deleted)	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Colette Matthews is on SIC committee and WPLA Bd. Of Directors. DNR is a Liaison to the WPLA Bd. Of Directors. Darrell Zastrow is an SIC representative for DNR..						

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Objective 11: Commitment to comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, or local laws and regulations.

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11.1	<i>Program Participants shall take appropriate steps to comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local forestry and related environmental laws and regulations.</i>						
11.1.1	Access to relevant laws and regulations in appropriate locations.						
11.1.2	System to achieve compliance with applicable federal, provincial, state, or local laws and regulations.						
11.1.3	Demonstration of commitment to legal compliance through available regulatory action information.						
11.1.4	Adherence to all applicable federal, state, & provincial regulations and international protocols for research & deployment of trees derived from improved planting stock & biotechnology.						
11.2	<i>Program Participants shall take appropriate steps to comply with all applicable social laws at the federal, provincial, state, and local levels in the country in which the Program Participant operates.</i>	MF	X				
11.2.1	Written policy demonstrating commitment to comply with social laws, such as those covering civil rights, equal employment opportunities, antidiscrimination and anti-harassment measures, workers' compensation, indigenous peoples' rights, workers' and communities' right to know, prevailing wages, workers' right to organize, and occupational health and safety.	MF	X				
Objective Evidence & Notes	Confirmed in Bayfield County by review of personnel handbook, which included civil rights, equal employment, anti-discrimination, health and safety. Interviews and a review of the web indicated that these policies are being implemented.						

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Objective 12: To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry by encouraging the public and forestry community to participate in the commitment to sustainable forestry and publicly report progress.

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12.1	<i>Program Participants shall support and promote efforts by consulting foresters, state and federal agencies, state or local groups, professional societies, and the American Tree Farm System® and other landowner cooperative programs to apply principles of sustainable forest management.</i>	MF	X				
12.1.1	Support for efforts of SFI Implementation Committees.	MF	X				
12.1.2	Support for the development and distribution of educational materials, including information packets for use with forest landowners.	MF	X				
Objective Evidence & Notes	DNR Private lands foresters provide biodiversity conservation information to private landowners. Confirmed that handouts are available at DNR, and some county forestry offices.						
12.1.3	Support for the development and distribution of regional or statewide information materials that provide landowners with practical approaches for addressing biological diversity issues, such as specific wildlife habitat, critically imperiled or imperiled species, and threatened and endangered species.	MF	X				
Objective Evidence & Notes	DNR Private lands foresters provide biodiversity conservation information to private landowners. Confirmed that handouts are available at DNR, and some county forestry offices.						
12.1.4	Participation in efforts to support or promote conservation of working forests through voluntary market-based incentive programs (e.g., current-use taxation programs, Forest Legacy, or conservation easements).	MF	X				
Objective Evidence & Notes	Wisconsin DNR is responsible for implementation of the Managed Forest Law (MFL) current-use taxation program. The Wisconsin County Forest Program itself is an excellent example of conservation of working forests.						
12.1.5	Program Participants are knowledgeable about credible regional conservation planning and priority-setting efforts that include a broad range of stakeholders. Consider the results of these efforts in planning where practical and consistent with management objectives.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	WCFA engaged the US Forest Service during the plan revision for the Chequamegon – Nicolet National Forest. Confirmed that Wisconsin DNR has done a state-wide assessment “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” and that DNR biologists and others who review the 15-year County Forest Plans are aware of this assessment. Confirmed the process for refining this information to provide customized lists of species for each county. The Wisconsin Public Forest Resource Group meets twice annually, including Federal, State, & County Forest representatives. Other assessment work noted the decline in Jack Pine in NW Wisconsin and led to significant efforts to maintain Jack Pine on County Forests in this part of the state. Likewise, significant declines in Aspen acres on private forests have led to strong, continuing efforts to maintain this valuable type on county forests.						

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12.2	12.2 Program Participants shall support and promote, at the state, provincial or other appropriate levels, mechanisms for public outreach, education, and involvement related to forest management.						
12.2.1	Support for the SFI Implementation Committee program to address outreach, education, and technical assistance (e.g., toll-free numbers, public sector technical assistance programs).	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed DNR involvement in SFI Implementation Committee in 2005.						
12.2.2	Periodic educational opportunities promoting sustainable forestry, such as a. field tours, seminars, or workshops; b. educational trips; c. self-guided forest management trails; or d. publication of articles, educational pamphlets, or newsletters.						
12.2.3	Support for state, provincial, and local forestry organizations and soil and water conservation districts.						
12.2.4	Recreation opportunities for the public, where consistent with forest management objectives.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	Field observations at all forests visited confirmed that there are many recreational opportunities available, including a variety of trails, improved day use areas, parks, and campgrounds. Hunting is the most common use, and these lands appear on readily available printed maps as well as on the internet.						
12.3	Program Participants with forest management responsibilities on public lands shall participate in the development of public land planning and management processes.	MF	X				
12.3.1	Involvement in public land planning and management activities with appropriate governmental entities and the public.	MF	X				
Objective Evidence & Notes	County and State land planning and management activities are closely coordinated through the use of the Liaison foresters and by incorporating state forest management, private forestry, and county forestry activities within the same administrative line-staff field organization. County forests are managed by elected county board members (through a forestry committee that is a sub-set of the full board). Confirmed through review of planning procedures and records of public meetings that extensive public opportunities for comment are being utilized during the current planning effort, and that public members can comment during any monthly county forestry committee meeting.						
12.3.2	Appropriate contact with local stakeholders over forest management issues through state, provincial, federal, or independent collaboration.	MF	X				
Evidence & Notes	See previous Indicator and notes under 12.1.1.						
12.4	Program Participants with forest management responsibilities on public lands shall confer with affected indigenous peoples.	MF	X				
12.4.1	Program that includes communicating with affected indigenous peoples to enable Program Participants to a. understand and respect traditional forest related knowledge; b. identify and protect spiritually, historically, or culturally important sites; and c. address the sustainable use of nontimber forest products of value to indigenous peoples in areas where Program Participants have management responsibilities on public lands.	MF	X				

FC = Full Conformance EXR = Exceeds Requirements Major = Major Nonconformance Minor = Minor Nonconformance OFI = Opportunity for Improvement

Performance Measure/ Indicator		Auditor	----- Check Only One -----				OFI
			FC	EXR	Maj	Min	
Evidence & Notes	Confirmed that all four counties visited have made efforts to communicate with local tribes, with vary degrees of success. Tribes that wish to do so have the opportunity to comment on all county plans. Further, tribal members are afforded gathering opportunities afforded by their treaty rights. Confirmed that office personnel know the procedures for issuing free gathering permits to tribal members.						
12.5	Program Participants shall establish, at the state, provincial, or other appropriate levels, procedures to address concerns raised by loggers, consulting foresters, employees, the public, or Program Participants regarding practices that appear inconsistent with the SFI Standard principles and objectives.						
12.5.1	Support for SFI Implementation Committee efforts (toll-free numbers and other efforts) to address concerns about apparent nonconforming practices.						
Evidence & Notes							
12.5.2	Process to receive and respond to public inquiries.						
Evidence & Notes							
12.6	12.6. Program Participants shall report annually to the SFI Program on their compliance with the SFI Standard.						
12.6.1	Prompt response to the SFI annual progress report.						
Evidence & Notes							
12.6.2	Recordkeeping for all the categories of information needed for SFI annual progress reports.						
Evidence & Notes							
12.6.3	Maintenance of copies of past reports to document progress and improvements to demonstrate conformance to the SFI Standard						
Evidence & Notes							

FC = Full Conformance EXR = Exceeds Requirements Major = Major Nonconformance Minor = Minor Nonconformance OFI = Opportunity for Improvement

Objective 13: To promote continual improvement in the practice of sustainable forestry and monitor, measure, and report performance in achieving the commitment to sustainable forestry.

Performance Measure/ Indicator		Auditor	----- Check Only One -----				OFI
			FC	EXR	Maj	Min	
13.1	<i>Program Participants shall establish a management review system to examine findings and progress in implementing the SFI Standard, to make appropriate improvements in programs, and to inform their employees of changes.</i>	MF					1
13.1.1	System to review commitments, programs, and procedures to evaluate effectiveness.	MF					1
Objective Evidence & Notes	The system includes the annual partnership meeting and the three-year program audits. The forest certification aspects of these have been developed but not fully implemented. Reviewed minutes of Wood County Forest 2005 Annual Partnership Meeting, which included several paragraphs relating to certification, and all items are part of the management review process (State DNR oversight responsibilities). Reviewed "Executive Summary of Program Review 2005 (July 28, 2005) Marinette County Forest Program", the three-year audit. Again, certification issues were included. Interim measures, including regular certification meetings, updates, and directives, as well as the close integration of certification into the revision of all participating counties' 15-Year Forest Management Plans ensure that progress and reporting of progress have been effectively implemented. Revised methods for the three-year audits and partnership meetings have not been finalized and funding and personnel are not yet allocated for this requirement. OFI: There is an opportunity to improve systems for review of SFI programs in the area of internal (3-year) audits and partnership meetings.						
13.1.2	System for collecting, reviewing, and reporting information to management regarding progress in achieving SFI Standard objectives and performance measures.	MF	X				
Objective Evidence & Notes	The County Forestry Specialist has long been responsible for collecting and reporting information about the county forest system, and now includes SFI-related issues as a major part of his responsibilities. Confirmed regular reporting to the forestry team. See below.						
13.1.3	Annual review of progress by management and determination of changes and improvements necessary to continually improve SFI conformance.	MF		X			
Objective Evidence & Notes	DNR has devoted considerable resources to the review of certification progress, including close attention by the County Forestry Specialist and the Private Forestry/Forest Certification Specialist and their supervisor. In addition, there is regular reporting to the Forestry Leadership team, as well as excellent communication and involvement by the County Administrators through the County Forest Certification Committee. The SFI program has shown considerable progress since initial certification, including closing all four CARs, incorporating certification into the 15-year plans, and progress in several areas relating to OFIs. Review has been more often than annual, and changes and improvements have been continuous						

FC = Full Conformance EXR = Exceeds Requirements Major = Major Nonconformance Minor = Minor Nonconformance OFI = Opportunity for Improvement

Auditor Notes (attach additional pages as needed)

Opportunities for Improvement

1.1.4 A long-term resource analysis to guide forest management planning at a level appropriate to the size and scale of the operation, including: a. a periodic or ongoing forest inventory

An opportunity exists to improve the timeliness of recon updates.

2.3.5 Retention of vigorous trees during partial harvesting, consistent with silvicultural norms for the area. There is an opportunity to improve application of this guidance, which is quite deep.

2.3.6 Criteria that address harvesting and site preparation to protect soil productivity.

There is an opportunity to improve the consistent definition of excessive rutting and to better understand the long-term effects of compaction and rutting.

4.1.4 Development and implementation of criteria, as guided by regionally appropriate science, for retention of stand-level wildlife habitat elements (e.g., snags, mast trees, down woody debris, den trees, nest trees).

There is an opportunity to improve the knowledge and use of quantitative guidelines for stand level retention (e.g. coarse woody debris, den trees, snags) to ensure more consistent implementation.

13.1.1 System to review commitments, programs, and procedures to evaluate effectiveness.

There is an opportunity to improve systems for review of SFI programs in the area of internal (3-year) audits and partnership meetings.

Monday, February 6, 2006:- Bayfield County

Topics Covered:

- Development of seeding unit for Jack Pine direct seeding
- public involvement in plan development (reviewed minutes of public meetings)
- county social policies, including Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, Employee Assistance, Drug-Free Workplace, etc
- attempts to communicate with tribes (tribal relations committee)
- increases in revenue generation from forestry for county
- maintenance of training records; training opportunities for loggers
- implementation of logger training requirements
- invasives
- fire protection issues – first community fire plan for Wisconsin here
- recreation uses and management on County forest
- use of GIS (1999 digitized maps)
- 10% of forest inventoried each year

Sites Visited:

Sale 2642 90 acre Red Oak thinning

Sale 2679 72 acre Northern hardwood with strong oak component, gaps

Sale 5903 active harvest with thinning, shelterwood, and clearcut units; interviewed Brandon Madison, subcontractor for Dave Barningham

Sale 2758 Aspen clearcut (not seen) and Spruce thinning (from vehicle)

Tuesday, February 7, 2006:- Price County

Topics Covered:

- recreation uses and management on Price County forest
- attempts to communicate with tribes regarding arch and cultural sites

- increases in revenue generation from forestry for county
- maintenance of training records
- implementation of logger training requirements
- HCVF- Jump River and Flambeau Hemlock Area have been established
- regeneration of aspen when cut in spring/summer
- protection of watercourse buffers
- interview with logging contractor regarding county administration, training, implementing BMPs
- snag and den tree retention
- variable retention within aspen clearcuts
- goshawk nest sites, identification and safeguards
- use of GIS

Sites Visited:

Concrete Park. unique cultural site and red pine thinning

Tract 07-02. 40-acre aspen clearcut

Tract 12-04. 31-acre aspen clearcut

Tract 03-04. 28-acre regeneration cut aspen/mixed hardwood (red maple, ash, birch)

Tract ?. Active hardwood improve cut

Tract 12-03. 2-acre white birch shelterwood, 1-acre aspen clearcut, 23-acre hardwood selection

Tract 10-03. 50-acre aspen clearcut.

Tract 16-02. 35-acre hardwood selection marked (not cut)

Wednesday, February 8, 2006:- Iron County

Topics Covered:

- developing rutting guidelines (CAR 2004.6)
- attempts to communicate with tribes regarding arch and cultural sites
- establishment of and survey for HCVF-
 - no harvest area within Penokee Range
 - planned research on songbird populations within the range
- northern hardwood silviculture- (also see discussion under CAR 2004.4)
 - response to CAR 2004.4- evaluation and approval process to ensure planned harvest meets WI DNR Silvicultural Handbook- Chapter 40 Hardwood Management
 - target maximum diameter of 20"
 - conversion to uneven aged stand through gap creation to establish next cohort
 - snag and den tree retention
 - crop tree release
 - removing low quality and risk
 - tree defects, e.g., basswood, and related growth, value, and economic considerations
- recent forester training on NHI- focus on rare plants
- recreation uses and management on Iron County forest

Sites Visited

Tract #1905 – 119 acre hardwood selection cut, 1st entry into 2nd growth stand

Tract #5-04 – 104 acre hardwood selection cut,

Tract #15-05- 56 acre hardwood selection, marked (not yet harvested)

Tract #10-05- 31 acre hardwood selection, marked (not yet harvested)

Thursday, February 9, 2006:- Ashland County

Topics Covered:

- recreation uses and management on Ashland County forest—numerous hunter walking trails
- northern hardwood silviculture-
 - applying the Silvicultural Handbook
 - target maximum diameter 24”
 - conversion to uneven aged stand through gap creation to establish next cohort
 - snag and den tree retention
 - crop tree recruitment
 - gap openings
 - crop tree recruitment
 - removing risk and mortality
- marking of sale boundaries
- utilization specifications
- HCVF- ATM habitat south of Penokee Range
- logging contractor interview
- timber sale administration
- BMP training

Sites Visited

Sale # 855 34-acre aspen clearcut; 6 acre hardwood thinning

Sale # 848 58-acre aspen clearcut;

Sale # 859 97-acre northern hardwood thinning, 3rd entry

Sale # 827 145-acre shelterwood in northern hardwood type

Northern portion of forest- Hemlock regeneration effort in HCVF area

Additionally we drove by several other sales and activities not selected including red pine thinnings, northern hardwood thinnings, aspen clearcuts, and hunter walking trails.